Strategic Master Plan: Augusta University

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1. Mission Statement

Current Mission:

Augusta University's mission is to provide leadership and excellence in teaching, discovery, clinical care, and service as a student-centered comprehensive research university and academic health center with a wide range of programs from learning assistance through postdoctoral studies.

Affirmation:

This mission is sharp and full of purpose. It covers a wide span—teaching to clinical care—while staying grounded in being student-centered. It needs no rework. Let it be the bedrock.

That said, this mission provides more than a static framework—it's a live compass. It shapes how Augusta University recruits, teaches, serves, and innovates. This strategic plan honors that foundation while extending its reach across new territories like digital transformation, public-private partnership, and student wellness.

2. Vision Statement

Proposed Vision:

To become the South's leading destination for education, research, and health care innovation—an institution where students feel seen, heard, and equipped for a lifetime of impact.

This isn't just a restatement of goals. It's an invitation—to students, staff, faculty, and partners—to believe in what Augusta can become. This vision speaks to empowerment and relevance, with an eye toward equity and purpose-driven leadership. It blends big ambition with human-scale care.

3. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Academic health center status with elite programs in medicine, nursing, and dental sciences
- A strong culture of interdisciplinary research
- Newly expanded partnerships with local hospitals and health systems
- Regional economic anchor driving employment and innovation in Augusta
- Resilient student services infrastructure adapted for hybrid environments
- Strong institutional values that foster community belonging and leadership
- Investment in inclusive initiatives and student mental health access

Weaknesses

- Brand visibility still limited beyond Southeastern U.S.
- Resistance to change in some legacy systems (manual processes, redundant workflows)
- Staff turnover in advising and student support offices
- Limited presence in fast-growing tech-driven academic spaces (e.g., data science)
- Overreliance on tuition and state allocations as primary funding streams

Opportunities

- Expansion into online and nontraditional adult learning markets
- Attracting top-tier faculty and researchers with strong incentive packages

- Reaching underserved rural counties with health and education services
- Establishing strategic relationships with biotech and health analytics companies
- Pioneering telehealth and digital diagnostics research hubs
- Launching multi-campus certificate programs targeting career upskilling

Threats

- Shrinking public funding and shifting political priorities at the state level
- Higher education skepticism nationally post-pandemic
- Changing accreditation standards requiring fast compliance shifts
- Increased cyber risk with broader digital adoption
- Declining high school graduation rates across key feeder states

4. 1-Year Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Improve Freshman Year Retention

- Action: Launch an AI-powered advising assistant focused on high-risk student populations
- Timeline: Fall 2025
- KPI: Increase retention rate from 76% to 81%
- Responsible: Office of Academic Success, Provost's Office

Goal 2: Public Awareness Campaign

- Action: National digital campaign with real student stories and interactive content
- Timeline: Spring 2026
- KPI: 20% increase in nonresident applications
- Responsible: Marketing, Admissions, Student Life

Goal 3: Expand Community Health Outreach

- Action: Launch six community wellness clinics in Richmond County
- Timeline: Rolling through December 2026
- KPI: 2,000 residents served in year one
- Responsible: College of Public Health, College of Nursing

Goal 4: Faculty Development in Inclusive Pedagogy

- Action: Implement annual inclusive excellence training for all academic units
- Timeline: AY 2025–26
- KPI: 100% participation among full-time faculty
- Responsible: Faculty Affairs, Office of Inclusion and Equity

Goal 5: Broaden Academic Tutoring Access

- Action: Expand academic tutoring centers with evening and weekend support
- Timeline: Ongoing 2025–26
- KPI: 25% increase in student usage metrics

- Responsible: Academic Success Center, Peer Support Program

5. 3-Year Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Establish Center for Health Disparities Research

- Action: Build a $20M research center integrating public health, medicine, and data analytics
- Timeline: 2026–2028
- KPI: Secure $15M in grant funding; 30 new faculty hires
- Responsible: VP of Research, Grants Office

Goal 2: Student Belonging Accelerator

- Action: Faculty-student mentoring cohorts and peer-led DEI innovation labs
- Timeline: Full implementation by 2027
- KPI: 25% increase in climate survey satisfaction among marginalized students
- Responsible: Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Goal 3: Online Learning Expansion

- Action: Launch 12 online degree and certificate programs across high-demand fields
- Timeline: Staggered through 2028
- KPI: 2,000 new enrolled online learners
- Responsible: Digital Learning Division, Academic Deans

Goal 4: Sustainability Infrastructure Initiative

- Action: Retrofit 30% of campus buildings for energy efficiency and install solar arrays
- Timeline: 2026–2028
- KPI: 30% energy cost reduction
- Responsible: Facilities, Sustainability Council

Goal 5: Undergraduate Research Development

- Action: Introduce for-credit research pathways in all majors
- Timeline: Full access by 2027
- KPI: 50% increase in student research output
- Responsible: Center for Undergraduate Research, Department Chairs

6. 5-Year Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Health Innovation Leadership

- Action: Form R&D partnerships with six healthcare technology corporations
- Timeline: 2026–2030
- KPI: 10 patents filed; 5 products co-developed
- Responsible: Strategic Innovation Office

Goal 2: Smart Learning Environments

- Action: Full AR/VR classroom integration across general education and health sciences
- Timeline: Begin 2026, complete by 2030
- KPI: 80% usage by faculty in baseline instruction
- Responsible: Learning Technologies, Instructional Design Teams

Goal 3: Top 100 Public University Ranking

- Action: Strategic investment in student outcomes, faculty research, graduation rates
- Timeline: Continuous through 2030
- KPI: AU listed in U.S. News Top 100 Public Universities
- Responsible: President's Cabinet, Institutional Effectiveness

Goal 4: Rural Health Network Expansion

- Action: Develop four rural outreach hubs focused on care, training, and workforce development
- Timeline: One center per year from 2026 to 2030
- KPI: 20,000 Georgians served annually
- Responsible: School of Public Health, Clinical Operations

Goal 5: Cross-Disciplinary Problem-Solving Labs

- Action: Create joint student-faculty innovation teams across business, engineering, and health
- Timeline: Fully implemented by 2030

- KPI: 12 collaborative capstone projects annually
- Responsible: Interdisciplinary Task Force, Academic Affairs

7. Strategies and Action Plans

Each strategy in this plan is mapped to a core function of Augusta University: teaching, discovery, clinical care, service, or student development. Actions are designed to be realistic, measurable, and bold enough to move the institutional needle.

Year 1 Strategies:

- Execute visible wins (AI advising, DEI training)
- Engage external audiences through personal stories
- Invest in retention early to build downstream success

Year 3 Strategies:

- Expand research infrastructure and digital access
- Double down on personalized, equity-focused programs
- Future-proof operations with sustainable practices

Year 5 Strategies:

- Position AU among national innovation leaders
- Revolutionize classrooms with immersive tech
- Build a regional legacy through outreach and labs

Each timeline works like a launch sequence—building momentum from early changes into transformative scale.

8. Rationale

Why this plan? Because standing still means falling behind. Augusta University has the bones of a flagship: strong values, expert faculty, a deep bench of clinical excellence, and a city rooting for its success.

The goals were chosen for their high-leverage potential. Retention is more than a metric; it's the heartbeat of the student experience. Online learning isn't a trend—it's access. Research centers don't just bring prestige—they solve problems and attract funding.

We didn't chase buzzwords. We chased impact.

9. Additional Strategic Context

Augusta University lives at a rare crossroads: education, medicine, research, and community leadership. The institution has already proven it can serve local needs. This plan scales that capacity nationally and digitally—without losing its soul.

By embedding innovation, equity, and accountability into every layer, AU isn't just aiming for improvement. It's aiming for relevance and resilience in a world that rewards both.

10. Implementation Challenges and Risk Mitigation

Even the best-laid plans run into roadblocks. This section addresses the most likely implementation barriers and how AU will tackle them:

1. Funding Constraints

Mitigation: Prioritize scalable projects first. Pursue matching grants and industry sponsorships early in the rollout process.

2. Resistance to Change

Mitigation: Engage faculty and student leaders early. Pilot programs before wide rollout to gather data and support.

3. Staff Turnover

Mitigation: Offer retention incentives, clear career progression paths, and annual feedback surveys for all departments.

4. Tech Adoption Lag

Mitigation: Provide mandatory training on new learning technologies for all staff and faculty with phased implementation.

5. Program Saturation

Mitigation: Assess all new initiatives annually for overlap and relevance. Sunset any underperforming initiatives by year three.

11. Evaluation and Monitoring

To ensure accountability and consistent progress, AU will establish a dedicated Strategic Planning Evaluation Committee. This committee will:

- Publish a bi-annual Strategic Progress Report for internal and public audiences.
- Monitor KPIs via real-time dashboards using Tableau or similar platforms.
- Host open town halls each semester for community feedback.
- Adjust action plans yearly based on results and feedback.

Additionally, academic departments will be required to align annual goals with this strategic framework and submit alignment updates during performance reviews.

12. Strategic Alignment with Institutional Goals

This entire plan reinforces AU's long-term priorities:

Learning – From AI tutoring to hybrid programs, student-centered learning is central.

Discovery – Research hubs, interdisciplinary labs, and partnerships position AU as a leader in applied innovation.

Student Success – Every strategic milestone—from mental health to career readiness—was selected with student outcomes in mind.

Community – Public wellness clinics, regional centers, and local partnerships put service into action.

Stewardship – From campus sustainability to budget-conscious scaling, every action reflects financial responsibility.

And across it all? Innovation. Engagement. Belonging.

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